Softube

User Manual
Marshall Plexi
Super Lead 1959

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Softube User Manual

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Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this manual is accurate. However, there are a chance that we have made mistakes, and we hope that you understand that we are only humans. Please let us know about the mistake, and we'll fix it in the mix (or in the next version of this manual).

Support

On the Softube website (`www.softube.com`) you will find answers to common questions (FAQ) and other topics that might interest you.

Support questions can be posted at `http://www.softube.com`, where we will help you as fast as we can!

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E-mail: `info@softube.com`
Phone: +46 13 21 1623 (9 am – 5 pm CET)

Contents

1 *User Interface* *5*

Menu Row 5
Key Commands 6

2 *Marshall Plexi Super Lead 1959* *7*

Channel Strip Parameters 10
Cabinet and Microphones 12
Mono and Stereo Operation 13
Presets 13
Credits 13

1 User Interface

SOFTUBE PLUG-INS ARE "what you see is what you get" products. You should be able to intuitively learn the products within minutes, so that you can work fast and efficient with them. There are a couple of things that remain the same for all of our plug-ins, such as the menu row. These will be explained in this chapter. For detailed information of a particular plug-in, please see its chapter.

Menu Row

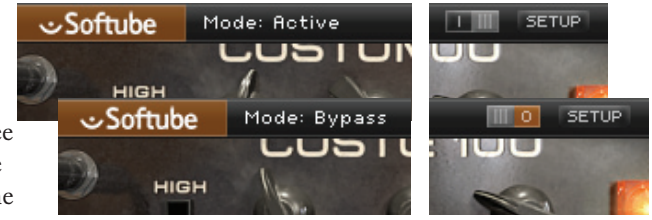
In the bottom of the plug-in interface, you will see a thin black row with some buttons. We'll use the Bass Amp Room plug-in as example, but the same goes for all plug-ins.

About Box Opens the "About" Box with version info.

Value Display Displays the knob value when the mouse is hovering over a control.

Enable Enable/Activate the plug-in. Set to OFF for bypass.

Setup Changes global options for all instances of that plug-in.



Enable

When the **Enable** switch is set to ON (I), the plug-in is active and will process audio. When set to OFF (0), it will be bypassed and not process any audio. It will take considerably less CPU when it is bypassed.

Setup

In the Setup window you can change settings that will affect all instances of that particular plug-in. If you for example de-select the "Show Value Display" option in the Bass Amp Room plug-in the value display will be off for all Bass Amp Rooms on your system until you select that option again.

The different options vary between Windows and Mac, and also different formats and plug-ins. The most common options are:

SHOW VALUE DISPLAY: Enables the parameter and value display in the bottom row of the plug-in.

REVERSE MOUSE WHEEL DIRECTION: (Mac OS Only) Changes if the a knob is turned up or down when the mouse wheel is turned up or down. *(Mac OS Only)*

> You need to restart your host software (DAW) before the changes to fully take effect!

If you messed something up and manually need to set these options, you'll find them in text format in the following locations:

MAC OS: `~/Library/Application Support/Softube`

WINDOWS: `username\Application Data\`

Key Commands

All numbers and labels in the plug-in are clickable. This allows you to easily select a setting by clicking on the wanted value. Hovering above a label will turn the mouse pointer into a pointing hand.

Mouse

Up/Down or Mouse Wheel	Change a parameter, such as a knob or a switch.

Keyboard

Fine Adjust	⌘ (Mac) or CTRL (Win), while changing the parameter value.
Reset to Default	ALT, while clicking on the knob or fader.
Solo Several Mics	SHIFT, while clicking on a **Solo** button

2 Marshall Plexi Super Lead 1959

The 100 Watt Marshall 1959 Super Lead, commonly referred to as the Plexi, is the most legendary guitar amplifier of them all, and its long list of users makes up a "who's who" of rock'n'roll history. Softube worked closely with Marshall's product experts and legendary recording engineer **Tony Platt**—who engineered **AC/DC**'s *Highway to Hell* and *Back in Black*—to ensure that the Plexi was captured in the best possible manner. The result is this plug-in which is available exclusively to UAD-2/Apollo users.

It's not a Plexi. It's *the* Plexi.

The particular amplifier that Softube modeled and based the UAD-2/Apollo plug-in on is not just any Marshall Plexi. In the making of this plug-in, Softube worked closely with Marshall's product expert **Chris George**, who lent us this amp from Marshall's own "museum" (not open to the public). This very amp, built in 1967 and kept in pristine shape (at least on the inside) by Marshall's technical staff, is Marshall's own reference to how a Plexi should sound.

Patching

The Plexi has two channels, with a high and low input each. Channel I is bright and present, while Channel II is dark and full bodied. A lot of sonic variation can be obtained from patching these channels together in different manners, which is faithfully modeled in this plug-in.

The right way to do it

But the sound of a guitar amp doesn't just come from the amp itself. The cabinet choice, microphone

selection and microphone placement are also vital parts in getting that sound. Therefore, Softube used the expertise of legendary engineer **Tony Platt** for the cabinet and microphone simulation. Tony's credentials speak for themselves. Among many other fantastic records, he engineered **AC/DC**'s *Highway to Hell* and *Back in Black*. It's safe to say Tony knows better than most how to record a loud Marshall amplifier.

The Cabinet Choice

The goal for this plug-in was to capture how the Plexi sounded when it was new back in 1967, to get the sound Jim Marshall himself intended.
To capture the typical late sixties tone, Tony and Chris—after much testing at Marshall headquarters—chose to use a straight 1960BHW 4x12 inch speaker cabinet, loaded with Celestion G12H-30's. These are relatively low wattage speakers, similar to those used at the time, which will saturate more easily compared to more modern constructions. This adds a lot of character to the end result. The particular speakers in this cabinet were not from the sixties, as speakers that have spent nearly 50 years reproducing the sound of 100 watt guitar amplifiers will have deteriorated and give a much different sound compared to what was intended. The speakers used had however been well broken in to reach their full potential and liveliness.

Three mic settings

Tony chose to make three different microphone sets with three microphones in each—two close mics and one room mic. The user can open the plug-in's side panel where an easy to use channel strip appears. Here, the user can select between the three sets of microphones and adjust the individual microphone levels and panning. The settings are named FET, VALVE and DYNAMIC to indicate what microphone types were used.

Amplifier Parameters

The functionality of the front panel controls correspond exactly to those of the real amplifier. And just like in real life, it is possible to connect the amplifier's two channels in a number of ways.

On/Off Bypasses the amplifier when set to OFF.

Presence Increases the amount of presence—a treble boost accomplished by reducing the amount of high frequencies being subjected to negative feedback in the power amp section.

Bass, Middle and Treble Tone controls that determine the frequency content from the amplifier.

Volume I Controls the volume of the brighter sounding INPUT I.

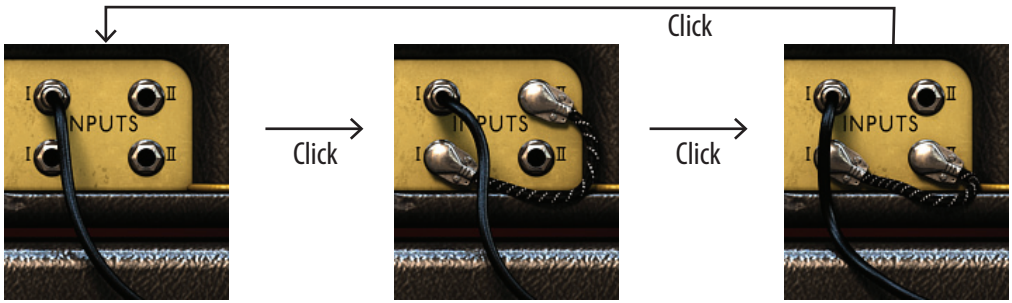
Volume II Controls the volume of the darker sounding INPUT II.

Patch switching Provides different combinations of high and low inputs for INPUT I and INPUT II separately. Clicking one of the four inputs selects it as the main input from the guitar (black cable). Clicking the selected guitar input again rotates between the available patching patters (with the short black/white fabric-covered patch cable).

Patch Switching

By patching the inputs you will get different input gain and different tonality from the amp. INPUT II is very dark sounding, and by combining it with INPUT I you can work the **Volume** knobs almost like an EQ.

The most common way of patching is going into



Black cable (guitar) in Input I High input, no patching between channels. Click on the input to select the first patch configuration, or another input to select a different input.

Black cable (guitar) in Input I High input, patching between Input I Low and Input II High. This is the standard patch. Click the input again to select the second patch configuration.

Black cable (guitar) in Input I High input, patching between Input I Low and Input II Low. Click the input to remove the patch.

INPUT I at the top, and patching from the low INPUT I to the top INPUT II, but feel free to experiment!

Input Channels

Input I (top) Bright, high gain. 1 MOhm input impedance

Input I (bottom) Bright, low gain. 130 kOhm input impedance

Input II (top) Dark, high gain. 1 Mohm input impedance

Input II (bottom) Dark, low gain. 130 kOhm input impedance

Note that clicking any parameter name on the front panel resets the corresponding knob to its 12 o'clock position.

Channel Strip Parameters

The channel strip can be opened by clicking the wood side with the green Channel Strip sticker. It can be closed again by clicking the same wood side, or by dragging the amplifier to right.

Equaliser Main Out:

Low Neutral/bypass in the 12 o'clock setting. Turning clockwise boosts the low end with a shelving filter. Turning counterclockwise cuts the low end with a low cut filter.

Equaliser Main Out:

High Neutral/bypass in the 12 o'clock setting. Turning clockwise boosts the treble with a shelving filter. Turning counterclockwise cuts the treble, also with a shelving filter.

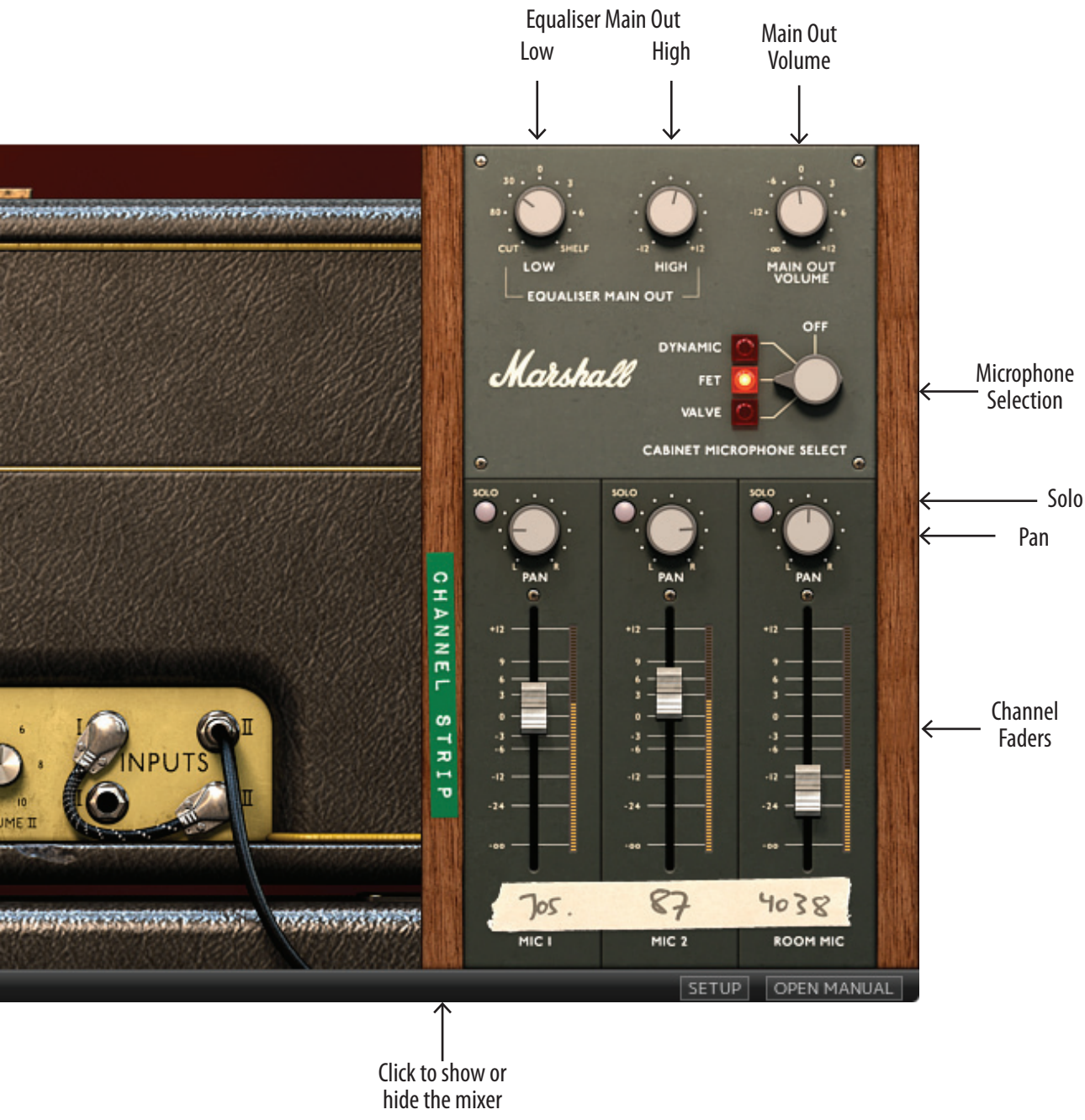
Main Out Volume Adjusts the output volume out of the entire plug-in.

Cabinet Microphone Select Select which set of microphones to use, see description in the next section.

Solo Sets the selected microphone channel in Solo mode, disabling the two others. Only one channel can be soloed at the time.

Pan Places the microphone channel in the desired position in the stereo panorama.

Channel faders Adjusts the volume of the respective microphone channel.


Equaliser Main Out
Low
High
Main Out Volume
LOW
HIGH
MAIN OUT VOLUME
EQUALISER MAIN OUT
Marshall
DYNAMIC
FET
VALVE
OFF
CABINET MICROPHONE SELECT
Microphone Selection
SOLO
PAN
Solo
Pan
CHANNEL STRIP
Channel Faders
MIC 1
MIC 2
ROOM MIC
SETUP
OPEN MANUAL
Click to show or hide the mixer

Cabinet and Microphones

The 16 ohms **1960 BHW** cabinet was recorded with a legendary range of microphones, all carefully selected to give a wide variety of tones, and carefully positioned to sound fantastic when used in combination with each other.

Valve Microphones

A thick and solid sound, with a slightly rounded top.

Mic 1 Neumann U 67 (cardioid, -10 dB pad activated)

Mic 2 Neumann U 67 (cardioid, -10 dB pad activated)

Room mic AKG C 12

FET Microphones

Slightly more open sound with lots of ambience from the room mic.

Mic 1 Josephson E22

Mic 2 Neumann U 87 (cardioid, -10 dB pad activated)

Room mic Coles 4038

Dynamic Microphones

Typical dynamic sound with a solid low mid-range from the 57 and aggressive top from the 609.

Mic 1 Shure SM 57

Mic 2 Sennheiser E 609

Room mic Neumann U 87 (omni)

Off (No Cabinet or Microphone)

Sets the cabinet and microphone emulation in bypass, so that only the direct sound from the Marshall Plexi amplifier head is heard. This is usually not regarded as a very pleasant sound, but the setting is useful for combining the amplifier with other cabinet/microphone models, such as the ones available in Softube Vintage Amp Room, Bass Amp Room, Metal Amp Room, Half Stack or Bass Amp Room 8x10. In all these plug-ins, the amplifier section can be bypassed. This would be the recommended setting, when combining the Marshall Plexi head with the cabinet in either of those plug-ins.

Mono and Stereo Operation

The Marshall Plexi Super Lead 1959 is preferably run in mono-to-stereo or stereo mode. The amplifier will always be in mono, but the cabinets can be panned separately.

Presets

The included presets were created by Tony Platt and Chris George, and provides an excellent way of exploring the tones of this amplifier. A difficulty with plug-in presets is that it's impossible to know what input gain the user has into the plug-in, so a "clean" preset might sound very distorted in your setup, or maybe the crunchy presets are just too clean.

If that is the case, adjust either the volume control of your guitar or guitar interface, or the **Volume I** and **Volume II** controls in the plug-in to get the desired sound.

A common way of using the Plexi amp is to keep the **Volume** knobs at around 12 o'clock and changing the gain with the volume control of the guitar.

Credits

Henrik Andersson Vogel – project management, manual and marketing. **Niklas Odelholm** – product design, cabinet modeling, graphic design. **Arvid Rosén** – amp modeling. **Oscar Öberg** – power amp modeling. **Tony Platt** - sound design, **Chris George** - Marshall expert and sound design, **Paul Shyrinskykh** – quality assurance. **Patrik Holmström** – framework programming. **Torsten Gatu** – framework programming. **Erik Hampusgård** – configurations and building. **Mattias Danielsson** – support.

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